

Folk Tale

Little Ashes

A Native American *Cinderella* Tale

retold by Liane B. Onish
illustrated by Pascal Constantin



Macmillan/McGraw-Hill



Read to Find Out

How is Little

Ashes like

Cinderella?

How is Little

Ashes different?

STRATEGIES & SKILLS AT A GLANCE

Comprehension

- Strategy: Generate Questions
- Skill: Make Inferences

Vocabulary

- amount, clever, collectors, double, reward, stored

Vocabulary Strategy

- Word Parts: Suffixes

Phonics

- long /ō/o

Word count: 884

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Chapter 1

Little Ashes

Once upon a time, there lived a father who had three daughters. The two older sisters were lazy and mean. They made the youngest sister do all their work.

The youngest sister was as hardworking as the other two were lazy. She was as kind as her sisters were mean.



The youngest sister spent most of her time cooking and tending the fire. She was covered with ashes from head to toe. The older sisters teased her and called her Little Ashes.



Chapter 2

Strong Wind and Soft Rain

Across the lake lived a powerful hero named Strong Wind. Strong Wind was so powerful that he could make himself invisible. Only one person could see him. That person was his sister, Soft Rain.

Others could only see Strong Wind's footprints and the flap of his wigwam open and close as they walked by. They could never see Strong Wind himself.





One day, Strong Wind said to his sister, "It is time for me to take a wife. If a maiden has a good and kind heart, she will be able to see me. The maiden who can see me is the one I will marry."

The news that Strong Wind would marry spread quickly. Each maiden put on her finest dress and went to see Soft Rain.

Chapter 3

The Test

Soft Rain was very wise. She had a clever test for the maidens seeking to marry her brother. She greeted each maiden, as Strong Wind sat and watched. "Do you see my brother?" asked Soft Rain.

"Oh, yes!" the maidens cried, even though it was not true.



Soft Rain went on to ask, "By what does my brother pull his sled?"

The maidens had to guess. They were always wrong. None had a heart good and kind enough to see Strong Wind.

All the maidens failed the test, so Soft Rain asked no more questions. She just sent them home.





Like the other maidens, Little Ashes and her sisters wished to marry Strong Wind. The older sisters asked their father for cloth to make new dresses and shell beads for necklaces.

Then the sisters said, "Little Ashes sews so well. She will make our new dresses!"

Little Ashes sewed and sewed. While she did, her sisters used all of the shell beads that their father had saved for many years.

In their new dresses and necklaces, the older sisters went to Strong Wind's wigwam. Soft Rain greeted the two maidens warmly. She asked, "Do you see my brother?"

"Of course!" they said, even though Strong Wind was invisible to them.

"By what does he pull his sled?" Soft Rain asked.

"A rope of grass!" guessed one sister.

"A strong vine!" guessed the other.

Soft Rain shook her head. "No, you do not see my brother," she said. Then she sent the two sisters away.



While her sisters were gone, Little Ashes went to her father. "May I have cloth for a new dress? May I have beads for a necklace, too?"

He said sadly, "I am sorry, little one. Your sisters were greedy collectors. I have no more cloth or beads. But you have no need of them. You have a good and kind heart. One day, your reward will be far greater than a new dress or fine necklace."

Poor Little Ashes went for a walk in the woods. There she noticed birch bark on the ground. "I can make a dress of bark," she thought happily. "Thank you, Mother Earth!"





Little Ashes took only the amount of bark she needed. She gathered flowers, again thanking Mother Earth. Then, Little Ashes wove the flowers into a necklace.

After washing her face and hair, Little Ashes put on her new clothing. She had some feathers stored away for making a blanket. She braided two of them in her hair.

Chapter 4

A New Name

In her bark dress, flowers, and feathers, Little Ashes arrived at Strong Wind's wigwam. Soft Rain greeted her and asked, "Do you see my brother?"

Little Ashes answered, "A handsome man approaches. Is he your brother?"

Then Soft Rain asked, "By what does he pull his sled?"

"By the trunks of two oak trees," Little Ashes replied.



Soft Rain smiled and went on. "What does he wear around his shoulders?"

"Your brother wears a beautiful blanket made of a double rainbow!" exclaimed Little Ashes.

"You do see my brother!" cried Soft Rain. "You must have a good, kind heart. You are the maiden that my brother seeks."



Strong Wind, Soft Rain, and Little Ashes talked through the night. She explained why she was called Little Ashes.

As the sun rose on a new day, Strong Wind said, "You will be my wife, the light of my life. So I will call you Dawn Light."

With great joy, Strong Wind and Dawn Light were married. Dawn Light's father was happy for his youngest daughter. Her sisters were not.





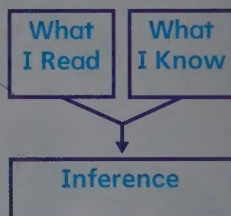
Strong Wind said, “Dawn Light, your sisters need to learn a lesson for their mean ways. I will make them tremble before us.” Then Strong Wind turned the sisters into birch trees. The leaves shivered in the slightest breeze. They trembled in the softest rain.

But Dawn Light had a good and kind heart. She let Strong Wind punish her sisters for only one day.

Comprehension Check

Retell

Use the Inference Chart to help you retell the story.



Think and Compare

1. Why does Little Ashes thank Mother Earth? **(Make Inferences)**
2. How is Little Ashes like other Cinderella stories you know? How is Little Ashes different? **(Evaluate)**
3. What does Little Ashes do that shows she has a good and kind heart? **(Analyze)**

Literacy Activities



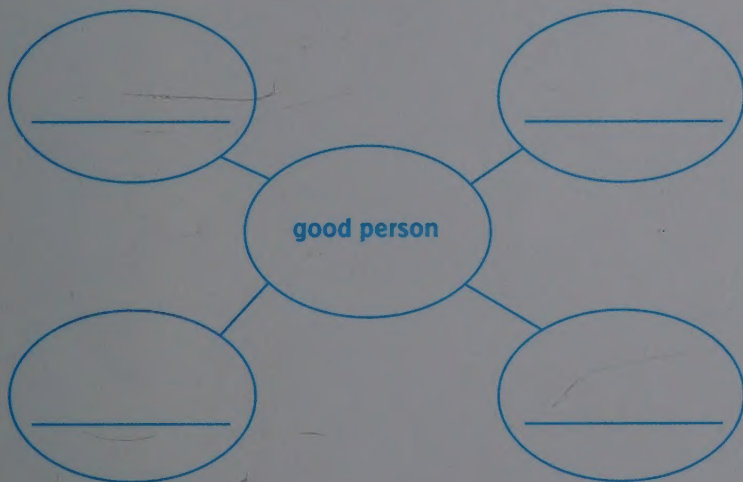
What's Next?

Write what happens next in the story. How do Dawn Light's sisters behave the day after Strong Wind turned them into trees? What do they say? How do they act?



Synonyms

Copy the web. In each circle, write a word that describes a good person.





Heroes

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